

# First ACCA Program Committee Meeting

- **Held in Kathmandu, Nepal**
- **Hosted by Lumanti / National Squatter and Savings Federations**
- **February 25 - 28, 2009**

*Note : This is a short report which summarizes the proposals presented, the decisions taken and the project and budget approvals made during the last two days of the first ACCA committee meeting in Kathmandu, Feb. 27 and 28, 2009. A more detailed report on the field visits to Bharatpur and the interesting discussions which took place during the meeting and site visits will accompany this report.*

- **Feb. 25: Participants arrive in Kathmandu. A briefing by Prafulla and Lajana on the situation in Nepal.**
- **Feb. 26: Bus ride to Bharatpur, field visits to Bharatpur squatter settlements and community improvement projects, dialogue with Bharatpur communities and municipality**
- **Feb. 27: Return to Kathmandu. Afternoon, detailed discussion of ACCA Program**
- **Feb. 28: Presentation of ACCA proposals. Committee discusses proposals and makes approvals.**

## WHO ATTENDED?

### Representatives from core countries active in the program (total 9 countries):

- From Philippines : Ms. Ana Oliveros, FDUP NGO in Manila. [ana\\_oliveros2@yahoo.com](mailto:ana_oliveros2@yahoo.com)
- From Indonesia : Ms. Wardah Hafidz, UPC in Jakarta. [upc@urbanpoor.or.id](mailto:upc@urbanpoor.or.id)
- From Cambodia : Mr. Leak Kay and Mr. Somsak Phonphakdee, UPDF Cambodia. [updf@clickmail.com.kh](mailto:updf@clickmail.com.kh)
- From Sri Lanka : Mr. K. A. Jayaratne Sevanatha NGO, Colombo. [sevanata@sltnet.lk](mailto:sevanata@sltnet.lk)
- From Nepal : Ms. Lajana Manandar, Lumanti NGO, Kathmandu. [lajana@lumanti.wlink.com.np](mailto:lajana@lumanti.wlink.com.np)
- From Viet Nam : Mr. Thong Van Le, Association of Vietnamese Cities (ACVN) [acvn@ftp.vn](mailto:acvn@ftp.vn)
- From Viet Nam : Mr. Liem Huy Ngo, Enda Vietnam. [endavietnam@viettel.vn](mailto:endavietnam@viettel.vn)
- **3 Absent countries : Pakistan, India, Mongolia**

### 3 community leaders

- From Sri Lanka : Ms. Rupa Manel, National leader, Women's Bank. [lankawomenco@sltnet.lk](mailto:lankawomenco@sltnet.lk)
- From Philippines : Ms. Ruby Papeleras and Ms. Jocelyn Cantoria, Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP). [rhaddad67@yahoo.com](mailto:rhaddad67@yahoo.com)
- From Nepal : Ms. Bimala Lama from National Women's Savings Network and the National leader of the Nepal Squatters Federation. [shelter@lumanti.wlink.com.np](mailto:shelter@lumanti.wlink.com.np)

### 2 senior people from the ACHR network

- Mr. Kirtee Shah, ASAG NGO, Ahmedabad, India. [kirtee@ksadps.com](mailto:kirtee@ksadps.com)
- Fr. Norberto Carcellar, PACSII NGO, Philippines. [pacsii@info.com.ph](mailto:pacsii@info.com.ph)

### 1 representative from the ACHR secretariat

- Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha. [achr@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:achr@loxinfo.co.th)

### Observers also attending the meeting :

- Chitwan District Leader, Nepal Squatters Federation, Nepal
- Lumanti board members, support staff and community workers
- Mr. Prafulla Pradhan, UN-Habitat Nepal. [prafulla.pradhan@unhabitat.org.np](mailto:prafulla.pradhan@unhabitat.org.np)
- Some key development professionals in Nepal from government agencies, Water Aid, Action Aid, etc.
- Mr. Chawanad Luansang ("Nad"), community architect from Thailand (who has been assisting the Nepal process). [chawanad@hotmail.com](mailto:chawanad@hotmail.com)
- Mr. Thomas Kerr, ACHR. [achr@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:achr@loxinfo.co.th)

## **PART 1 :**

### **Agreements about the ACHR Committee which will be coordinating the ACCA Program**

**1.1 AGREEMENT :** To open up ACHR committee meetings to more people, with 2 representatives being invited from each of the 9 core countries (see list in participants box above) : Several people in the meeting felt that these committee meetings (which involve a lot of intense learning, discussion, city visits, community project visits and interaction with the local development process) were too important a learning opportunity for such a small group. So it was suggested that a greater number of people from the participating countries be allowed to participate. It was agreed that each country can send two people to the committee meeting. It was also agreed that the most desirable team would include one community leader and one professional from each country, but it is up to the country group and will depend on their situation. If country groups feel it is important to send more than two participants, it will be necessary to discuss this with the ACHR Secretariat beforehand. But all the decisions will still be made by the 15 committee members, the extra people attending only as observers.



**1.2 AGREEMENT :** To use the upcoming Regional Community Forum to decide the three community representatives on the committee (either fixed people or rotating). It was agreed that the decision about the three community representatives on this ACHR Committee should come from regional community forum and their regional process, which has been tentatively scheduled to take place in the first week of April, hosted in the Philippines by the Homeless People's Federation. It was also agreed that there is a need for these community representatives (and other community members who attend the meetings) to have their own platform for discussion and sharing, to be organized in parallel with ACHR Committee and linked together.

**1.3 AGREEMENT :** To let the choice of the two senior coalition members on the committee be decided by the senior people themselves. It was proposed to organize a meeting of the key senior ACHR coalition members from around the region some time soon. Many aspects, vision and issues of the regional work of ACHR and the ACCA Program will be discussed at that meeting. At the same time, one of the items on the agenda of that meeting will be to develop a clearer idea of how to select the senior representatives to sit on the ACCA coordinating committee.

**1.4 AGREEMENT :** Observers from other countries can also be invited to these committee meetings, which will try to continue to be organized in different countries, on a rotating basis, so that there is always a significant exposure to local communities and some kind of participation in the local development processes as part of the meeting, as a means of grounding the meetings in what's happening on the ground and of deepening the regional learning about an increasingly broad array of Asian cities and development contexts.

**1.5 AGREEMENT :** To try to build up sub-regional groupings of participating countries for mutual support, learning and coordination. Each sub-regional grouping of countries (South Asia, Indochina, Pacific Asia, Eastern Asia, etc.) should be able to communicate with each other and to exchange information or even present each other's proposed cases in the same sub-regional groups in the committee meetings. These sub-regions are all filled with experienced groups and all have their own rich histories of work, and it is important that these pools of experience is drawn into the ACCA Program and used to cross-brace the larger development process the program is trying to build. These sub-regional groupings also allow the systems of assistance to be decentralized, and reduce the impractical and unnecessary tendency to depend on the ACHR secretariat in Bangkok. So it is important that communications and some kind of coordinating mechanism be worked out among each country within the various sub-regional groups.

**1.6 AGREEMENT :** As was agreed in the last ACHR meeting in Bangkok, the structure of this ACCA coordinating committee will be allowed to prove itself for one year, and will then be assessed for further consideration and adjustment.

## **PART 2 :**

### **Key discussion points about the implementation of the ACCA Program**

**2.1 The need to set up a task force to undertake parallel research, studies** and analytical work on a variety of aspects of cities and city-wide community upgrading being implemented, as part of the ACCA Program. The ACHR secretariat will help coordinate and consult with the key people who are interested to work together and present in the next committee meeting. There is no doubt that this program will generate an immense quantum of knowledge and experience, and it is important that this knowledge be studied, supplemented, disseminated and plugged into a larger process leading to policy change at various levels.

**2.2 The importance of implementing the ACCA Program *STRATEGICALLY*.** The ACCA Program has been set up to provide support and tools to boost a community development process that is *city-wide* and *community-driven*. The program builds on existing networks to demonstrate, negotiate for and scale up a process of city-wide change. So it is important that we all work and think in ways that move beyond the conventional project-based approach to development. The ACCA Program is not intended to simply provide funding to extend the normal work our development agencies are already doing. The ACCA Program is using its support for small and big projects and for the city-wide processes to build strong community organizations with strong savings and community finance and local funds, and to make concrete, visible changes to the situations of eviction and the conditions of poor communities in as many Asian cities as possible within the coming three years. So a more strategic approach and intervention should always be an important consideration in all aspects of the program's implementation.

**2.3 The importance of developing a proper city information system,** which allows us to compare cities across Asia and to assess the progress or performance of the city development process in a more scientific and comparable manner. So the groups should develop the information system of the city - all working together within a city. The development of this information system will be an extremely important condition for the support from the ACCA Program.

**2.4 The need to strengthen communities and open up much more space for communities city-wide to act, but also to use of the ACCA Program to link communities with their local governments and build partnership with other development actors in their cities.** So it is also important that we all take a broader, city-wide approach in our work and our understanding.

**2.5 The need to develop some kind of national platform to discuss and review proposals before they are submitted to the ACCA Program.** In some countries, the proposals came to the ACHR Secretariat and regional ACCA committee directly and independently from other proposals in the same country. This made the committee feel it would be difficult to make decisions, because sometimes we don't know the people, the process and the relevant context enough. If proposals come directly to the region, bilaterally, it means the ACCA committee, or the ACHR Secretariat, will have to use its own judgment. There is a need to develop a platform at the national level which allows the different groups in a country to sit together, present and consider the round of project proposals together, give suggestions to the regional ACCA committee. This national platform would act as a learning, helping and balancing mechanism within the country, which is crucial.



## **PART 3 :**

### **Agreements on elements of the ACCA Program**

#### **3.1 It was agreed that there will be two levels of approvals made by the ACCA Committee :**

- **Good idea but needs more information and preparation** to develop the ideas and process, and re-submit the proposal in the next committee meeting, or later.
- **Approve the project in principle, but it may need more details** and a few project conditions must be worked out before the budget is released. These additional details and adjustments to the proposed projects may either be worked out with the ACHR secretariat or presented in next ACCA committee meeting, so the budget can be released.

#### **3.2 Agreements on budget ceilings for city and national process support :**

- **Fixed ceiling for national coordination expenses:** \$10,000 per year per country. To make it simpler for local groups to coordinate the ACCA program process in their countries and pilot cities, it was decided in the meeting to set a fixed amount that each country will receive for various kinds of coordination, and in which the country will be able to manage all the necessary expenses such as coordination, administration, support to process in cities, meetings, workshops, consultations, etc. *But each country will have to submit a plan with detailed budget and expenses plan for this \$10,000 before the money is disbursed.*
- **Fixed ceiling of \$3,000 for expenses related to coordinating the city process :** \$3,000 per city, for the whole project period (for the time being), to cover whatever necessary city process such as surveying, networking, meetings, coordination, support to groups in the city, support to savings activities, etc. Each city needs a process to link things, to allow the communities to work together as a network, to get the city to work with them, to make a city development fund, to support learning and exchange, to organize workshops, to negotiate with land-owners, to develop the quality of the existing savings process, and to deal with the primary problem of eviction. All these things involve a strengthening of what already exists into a more consolidated process within the city. Because there are so many diverse activities, the committee agreed to set a ceiling of \$3,000 to cover all this. *But groups will still have to plan how to make use of this coordinating fund - which should be just part contribution to what they have already been doing, and which should work with contributions from other partners.*
- **Principal of following the emerging additional need.** Apart from the fixed budgets for city and country-level processes, an additional pool of funds (about US\$ 160,000 per year) will be left in the program budget to support any other special needs which emerge in the process of implementing the ACCA program, beyond those fixed amounts for national and city-level expenses. The procedures for how groups can propose to tap these special funds needs to be worked out, but the most important thing is that they relate *real needs*. These special funds can also be used to link and support other broader cities or groups for policy change - in the city or in the whole country.

#### **3.3 Agreements on number of big projects and small projects in each ACCA pilot city :**

- **Small projects:** It was agreed to fix a budget ceiling for the small development projects to not more than 5 projects per city ( $\$3,000 \times 5 = \$15,000$ ). However, each city has the full freedom to use this budget as they decide, for community projects, according to their real needs. The per-project budget does not need to be the same: the \$15,000 could fund 15 very modest projects of \$1,000 each, for example, or only 5-10 projects of varying amount. It is up to the needs and the decisions taken by communities and their supporters in each city. The management of this budget can also be handled in different ways, as grants, as a revolving loan fund, or as some combination of grant and loan - whatever is appropriate and useful and best answering the needs of that city, and whatever is decided on by the city process and joint mechanism. Disbursement of this budget will be possible whenever a list of all small projects with clear budget and information about community and city mechanism to manage is submitted, with an explanation about the process and how the relevant management mechanism will work.

- **Big projects:** The budget ceiling for big projects is \$40,000. This money is for the "hardware" of community housing projects, and can be used either to buy land and/or to construct housing and infrastructure. The big project funds can also be used to leverage additional funds (and land) from other sources. The best option is that the land for housing should come from the government, as much as possible, but in certain cases, it may be inevitable that land for housing be purchased. If absolutely necessary, some of this big project support can be given as a grant (as in the case of communities affected by disasters), but in most cases it will be managed as revolving fund for housing loans to urban poor communities.
- **Big project funds and the city fund :** This grant of maximum \$40,000 per city can go either directly to an already-set-up City Development Fund (to be managed by communities and city supporters), or can go to an already-established National CDF, and the National CDF then loan it to the city CDF, and city CDF in turn can on-lend the funds to the target community. The way this works is up to the design of each country's existing or planned community fund system, but it should have clear objectives of allowing community organizations to have the power to manage the housing process themselves, together with the assistance of their community networks and city support committees as much as possible.
- **The need to have details about how the revolving fund and housing projects will be planned and managed.** How are the projects linked with city-CDF, or with the national CDF? Who will manage the projects? Who makes what decisions? How will the process ensure that the projects are not only resolving one isolated community's needs but being used and shared to involve as many groups and actors in the city as possible, to strengthen the city-wide process and to offer a development opportunity and a learning experience to as many groups in the city as possible? What other contributions (in budget, materials, labor, land, technical assistance, permissions or supplementary infrastructure, etc.) will be leveraged by the project and be part of the project? How will the project and city CDF grow or be sustained?
- **The need to set a ceiling of about 5 or 6 BIG projects for any one country.** Since the total budget for big projects is US\$ 2 million (which is enough to implement 50 - 60 big housing projects across the region (about 15 countries), it was proposed that a ceiling of about 5 big projects per country be agreed upon at this stage. We may adjust this ceiling after the mid-project assessment in early 2010.



## **PART 4 :**

### **Agreements on a few upcoming events in the ACCA Program process :**

- **Regional Community Forum in early April 2009 (first week) in Philippines :** to discuss this new ACCA Process. In the meeting, we agreed to invite a *maximum* of five (5) community leaders (this number includes translators, where necessary) from each country. That means a total of about 50 - 60 participants. The Philippines Homeless People's Federation has agreed to host this forum.
- **Community Architects Workshop** in April 2009 (3rd or 4th week), to be organized in Karachi, Pakistan, hosted by the Karachi URC and OPP-RTI.
- **Next ACCA Committee Meeting in April 2009 :** To be organized in Karachi, so that it can link with the Community Architects Workshop, and besides taking part in the Pakistani development process, the committee meeting participants can also partly join in the community architects workshop.

## PART 5 :

### ACCA Project approvals :

#### 1. CAMBODIA (2 pilot cities: Serey Sophoan and Samrong)

In Cambodia, where less than 10% of all poor settlements in the country have land title, evictions are happening every minute, as private-sector led developments and real estate speculation displace people in both rural and urban areas around the country. We hear that at least 50% of all land in Cambodia - rural and urban - has already been leased to different private sector companies, individuals and international investors - many on 99-year leases! In this extremely difficult context, the UPDF-supported community savings movement is so important - a movement which has now expanded to the whole country and brought the community networks into an active process of saving, livelihood, welfare and upgrading in different cities. The networks are becoming platforms for negotiating with the government on the evictions that are happening. The two pilot cities are examples where people have faced eviction and have successfully negotiated alternatives with the city, with the support of the network, and finally were able to secure land from the government, through a kind of land sharing strategy.

These networks and the projects in these two provincial cities will make a new picture of new possibilities, and the network's confidence will be boosted by doing these projects, with the acceptance and collaboration from the government. The most important thing is that these projects demonstrate that these problems of housing and eviction *can be solved*, by people and the city, when poor communities have the strength of their own networks and a mechanism which links all the poor in the city into systems of mutual learning, mutual help and collaboration with the city. So this is a very strategic intervention, to get these two cities going. And because all the cities are linking with the other cities in the national network, the experience will show new alternatives.



##### PILOT CITY 1 : Serey Sophoan (Banteay Meanchey Province)

- **Small projects** : *The details of specific small projects were not developed in this first proposal, but the Cambodian team presented remarkably detailed list of who needs what small infrastructure projects, based on the community network's survey in Serey Sophoan. The list includes: 419 households need electricity, 222 households need toilets, 497 households need water supply, 5 communities need wells, 15 communities need "greening" (4,500 trees to be planted), and 5,220 meters of paved walkways need to be built.*
- **Big project** : Pilot housing project at the Preah Poun Lea Meanchey Community (on-site reconstruction, 387 households, but project will start with phase one - 50 households). The \$40,000 from ACCA will partially support an important pilot housing project at Preah Poun Lea Meanchey community, a crowded river-side settlement of 335 poor households who faced eviction from their city-center land when the city announced plans to expand the adjacent bus station two years ago. After a long period of negotiations and planning, the city has agreed to allow the people to stay and upgrade their settlement on the same site, with collective land title, in exchange for giving back a little of the land for the bus station and a riverside park. The community will do all the construction work themselves, with support from the network, the



city and UPDF. In this way, the city's development plans can go ahead, and the community gets a big development boost in the shape of secure land and decent housing.

### **PILOT CITY 2 : Samrong**

- **Small projects** : The details of specific small projects were not developed in this first proposal either, but the Cambodian team presented another detailed list of who needs what small infrastructure projects, based on the community network's survey in Samrong. The list includes: 419 households need electricity, 222 households need toilets, 2 communities need 3 wells, 15 communities need "greening" ( 4,500 trees to be planted), and 870 meters of paved walkways need to be built.
- **Big projects** : Pilot on-site upgrading project at the Samrong Thmey Community (224 households). Proposed budget \$40,000 for housing construction on the same land. The community has negotiated a long-term lease to the public land they occupy.

**Special proposed activity : National slum survey** (to be carried out in 26 cities, in all 24 provinces. Proposed budget = \$10,000.

**Approval details** : The proposed projects in Srisophon and Samrong are approved in principle, but need more details on the small projects and how the funds will work.

- **Approved for Serey Sophoan = \$49,000**
- **Approved for Samrong = \$49,000**
- **Approved for national survey of 26 cities = \$10,000**
- **TOTAL APPROVED = US\$ 108,000**

## **2. INDONESIA** (3 pilot cities proposed, UPC/Uplink)

The decision to launch the ACCA Program in the following two pilot cities came out of the December 2008 meeting of the National Uplink Network:

**PILOT CITY 1: Surabaya** : Surabaya is a city which is justly famous for its path-breaking Kampung Improvement Program (KIP), in which most of the city's informal settlements were upgraded on-site, with support from a national and city government program and the university. But that program is over now. What the government is now promoting instead is a more conventional "*1,000 Towers*" housing program for the poor, in which communities are evicted from their inner-city settlements and relocated to rental flats in contractor-built 4-5 story blocks in remote peripheral areas, 30 - 50 kms from the places where they live now, where they lose their jobs, social support systems and means of survival. The Uplink's proposed pilot project in Surabaya will show a strong, community-driven in-situ settlement upgrading model, as an alternative to this new government-driven disaster. Instead of breaking up communities, impoverishing and isolating them in remote resettlement flats, this project proposes to strengthen those existing community structures, where people are working together and helping each other, into a new housing process.

The proposed pilot project in Surabaya involves an already-established "Stren Kali" network of 9 (out of a total of 20) riverside slum communities (1,500 households), which were threatened with eviction for a large flood-control project. After a long struggle, they were able to persuade the city to allow them to stay, as "guardians of the river" instead of polluters. In October 2007, the city council finally issued a bylaw that allows these communities to stay, with the condition that they will have to upgrade their communities within five years. The Municipality has already agreed to help support parts of the upgrading. Other cities are reluctant to pass similar bylaws allowing riverside communities - especially the poor - to stay, like here in Surabaya, so if we can show the very good development model in this riverside network of communities, this city will set a precedent, and we take it up to national level.



- **5 small projects proposed**
- **1 big housing project** : to be used as a revolving fund giving loans for housing construction and improvement to squatters who move slightly away from the canal and reconstruct their houses, as part of the community-wide readjustment process to make way for canal-side public walkways. A long-term land lease to the communities, for the whole area, has been granted by the Surabaya Municipality. This project is to strategically show the community upgrading and housing development by river-side communities. It is expected that this pilot stage of the upgrading, supported by ACCA, will draw down more resources into the community's own revolving fund and will build a stronger acceptance of the community-driven upgrading model in the city.

**PILOT CITY 2: Makassar** : In this coastal city in south Sulawesi (the biggest city in Eastern Indonesia), which is the target for lots of local and foreign investments these days (especially for mining), evictions of people living in poor and informal settlements which occupy economically valuable lands in the city (especially along the coast) are increasing. KPRM (the network of poor communities in Makassar), is currently advocating eviction cases involving about 1,200 households. Many of these cases are now in court, with a high possibility of the poor losing the cases and losing their land.

**"Political contract" with the new mayor of Makassar** : Before last year's mayoral election, Uplink and KPRM mobilized 65,000 urban poor votes for their chosen candidate. With this 65,000 votes in their hands, they negotiated with him on several points: no eviction policy, a housing policy for the poor, education and health services for the poor, participatory and pro-poor city planning and budgeting. He agreed to this agenda and signed a "contract" with the city's poor in a big public meeting attended by 20,000 urban poor people. *And he got elected!* So now the organized poor communities in Makassar are following up on their contract with the new mayor, and are actively coming up with and proposing their own solutions and alternative housing policies.



The proposed ACCA pilot project in Makassar involves a collaboration between KPRM (the people's organization) and the Municipality, in the city's 14 sub-districts, especially focusing on housing, infrastructure and public facilities. These 65,000 poor people also have to convince themselves that they are able to do that! And the way they convince themselves of their ability to do is by actually doing! By doing the pilot projects. And they gradually come to understand that this is a better way, and that they are able to deliver things by themselves. Once the people's understanding comes to that point, the whole negotiation with the whole city will come in a very big way.

- **No small projects proposed yet**
- **1 big housing project**, total budget = \$40,000 This is a project in a city where communities can negotiate and signed contract with new elected Mayor to solve urban poor housing in the city. So the first housing project will start and will become revolving fund to demonstrate community-led development with support of the city and UPLINK

**PILOT CITY 3 : Jakarta** (*only the Northern area of the city, along the Java Sea*)

- **Small projects** : The details of specific small projects were not developed in this first proposal either, but Wardah presented a little information about the three large communities likely to be proposed for small projects in the next meeting: **Kebon Bayem** (a drainage project in a community of 243 households who have been evicted and relocated to Railway company land), **Rawa Malang** (another drainage project in a community of 465 households on land that is regularly flooded, but which they own) and **Kamal Muara** (another drainage



project in a community on government land with 1,120 households which has regular serious flooding problems)

- **No big housing project yet**

**Special proposed activity : A regional workshop on vernacular architecture and traditional wisdom in house design and building.** The idea was originally proposed and discussed by Uplink in Indonesia and Hunnarshala in India, and proposed to the ACHR Secretariat. No budget or time frame set up quite yet.

**Approval details :** Project approved in principal, but need more details about how the fund will be managed. The vernacular architecture workshop will be discussed further and more concrete details about it will be presented in next committee meeting in April 2009.

- **Surabaya : \$58,000**
- **Makassar : \$43,000**
- **Total budget approved in principal : \$101,000**

### **3. NEPAL** (2 pilot cities proposed, Lumanti)

**PILOT CITY 1 : Bharatpur** (*for more details see Nepal visit report notes*)

- **6 small upgrading projects** in six squatter communities: Gai Kharka (paving and drainage - \$2,000), Lanku (drainage - \$2,000), Naurange (water supply and toilets - \$2,600), Lama Tole (water supply and toilets - \$2,000), Ganeshsthan (toilets - \$2,600) and Nagarban (community center - \$2,600). Total small projects budget = \$13,800
- **1 big housing project** in the Salyani squatter community (30 households, squatters on public land under Forestry Dept, have informal agreement to allow people to stay and redevelop their community, but no land title papers net.) Total big project budget proposed : \$40,000.



**PILOT CITY 2 : Biratnagar**

- **No small upgrading projects proposed yet**
- **1 big housing project** at a relocated squatter community (40 households, municipality provides land, partnership with Habitat for Humanity) - Total big project budget \$40,000.

**Special proposed activity :** Lumanti proposed a project to prepare a national slum profile + some activities to help the two people's federations to participate in the national constitution-writing process taking place during the next two years. Details will be developed for the next committee meeting in April.



**Approval details :** Project approved in principal, but plans need to be adjusted to reflect real needs (especially the big housing project in Bharatpur). Also, need to add some small projects to the Biratnagar plans and clarify who does what and who pays for what in Biratnagar with Habitat for Humanity. Special projects will be developed and proposed in the April meeting. Total Budget approved in Principle : \$56,800 (Bharatpur) + \$ 43,000 (Biratnagar) = TOTAL US\$ 99,800

#### **4. BURMA** (1 pilot area, involving a cluster of 18 cyclone-affected villages near Yangon), (Proposed by the Spirit in Education Movement - SEM NGO)

**The situation :** Buddhist temples and monasteries occupy a very important and influential social place in Burmese society, and act as a kind of linking center for development. When the Cyclone Nargis happened two years ago, the monks all over Burma maintained this system by getting the communities and local groups together to assist the people affected by the storm, and the temples played a crucial role in providing temporary housing for people who'd lost their houses and managing relief. In these ways, the cyclone brought about the unexpected boon of bringing in new possibilities for people to work together in new ways.



**Proposed work :** The proposed pilot project is a continuation of that system, and will use these links in a cluster of 18 already-networked small villages (3,733 households, 15,345 people) surrounding the Aungzabu Monastery (in Khawmu Township, Yangon Division). The communities in this large area were badly destroyed by Cyclone Nargis two years ago and lost their animals, houses, seed storage, livelihoods and community infrastructure during the cyclone. They are still experiencing serious problems of clean water, shelter, food, housing, health and livelihood, but they have now formed a network, started savings, developed village-based management committees and begun to rebuild their villages and lives in modest ways. These communities will work together with SEM (a Thailand-based NGO), with local Buddhist monks at the Aungzabu Foundation and other local voluntary organizations to redevelop their destroyed housing and livelihoods after the devastating cyclone two years ago. The project will operate in a low-key way in an extremely difficult political situation, where no gatherings are allowed to take place. Houses to be built will be very simple, using local materials and extremely small budgets of about \$100 - \$200 per unit, so the \$40,000 budget will be able to assist at least 200 - 400 families.

**Approval details :** Project is approved in principal, but will need to develop the project along the lines of small and big projects. The big project for housing revolving fund will need details about how it is managed, especially how communities will have collective ownership, as much as possible. Approved amount of \$40,000 for a big housing project and \$15,000 for small projects + \$3,000 = total \$58,000. This budget may be used to develop a revolving fund (which gives grants or loans for housing and livelihood to community members).

- **An additional amount of \$25,800 was proposed** to expand this fund to include more livelihood revival and welfare activities in those 18 communities. This additional amount can come from the disaster support component of the ACCA Program.



**Total budget approved in principle : US\$ 83,800**

## 5. KOREA (One proposed pilot city : Seoul)

**PILOT CITY : Seoul.** Despite Korea's meteoric economic rise in recent decades, and the redevelopment of most of Seoul's informal communities into high-rise blocks, there are growing numbers of people who cannot afford even the most minimal housing in the formal sector and are forced to make their own shacks in informal slum settlements, called in Korea "Vinyl House Communities." Most vinyl house occupants are poor tenants who have been evicted from housing redevelopment areas but do not have enough money to rent even a single room in low-income residential areas. Vinyl house squatters simply settle in vacant hillside areas or public open spaces without any rights of land ownership and building permits. There are an estimated 48,000 households living in these informal slum communities in Korea, half of them on public land in low-lying and flood-prone areas, without any legal address. Only 16% of the houses have toilets, and because the houses in these settlements are built with cheap and highly-flammable materials to bear the harsh cold days in the winter, there are often fires which burn down the whole community.



**Proposed project :** This pilot project, which will be supported by the Seoul-based NGO "Asian Bridge", involves a process of bringing these informal vinyl house communities together to begin building a network to gradually develop their own solutions to their housing, land and infrastructure problems.

- **Small projects :** The project begins with five settlements, which will be a kind of pilot network, and the first step is for the communities to build communal toilets in these badly serviced settlements. Through the process of building a communal facility, the community will build a strong network skills. The project will supply the materials for building toilets in the form of loan. And, the resident will build the communal toilet together, while raising their independence and partnerships by paying back the construction cost in 3-5 years. Details about the toilet-building projects and about the system and management are yet to be worked out.



- **Big project :** In the long run, the project aims to organize the community and accumulate budget enough for the residents to lend a communal land near metropolitan area so that they all can become legal residents. A budget of US\$ 40,000 was proposed to seed a revolving fund which will give loans to community members in these vinyl house settlements for housing improvements. The plans and details about how this fund will be developed and managed will have to be developed.

**Approval details :** The idea of the project was approved in principal, but the details of the small and big project budgets - as well as the details about how the revolving fund will work - will have to be worked out. These project details will be submitted later. **Total budget approved in principal : US\$ 58,000**

## 7. PHILIPPINES (4 pilot cities proposed, by 4 different groups)

**PILOT CITY 1 : Quezon City - District 2** (Proposal by Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor - FDUP) In all of Metro Manila, Quezon City has the largest number and concentration of informal settlements, with at least 50% of the city's population living in informal squatter settlements, and Quezon City's District 2 is the most "slum-rich" district in the city. At the same time, there is an active and city-wide alliance of urban poor, the Quezon City Urban Poor Alliance (QC-UP-All), which brings together all the major urban poor groups of the city: CMP (housing) urban poor organizations (UPAK); urban poor organizations under threat of evictions (ULAP); Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines (HPFP) and Urban Land Reform Task Force among others. There is also a consortium of NGOs doing work for the urban poor in Quezon City, which includes CMP groups (FDUP, FDA, PASCRES); architects (ALTERPLAN); community organizing/anti-eviction groups (COM); academics (JJC ICSI) and support NGOs (PACSI) and the alternative law group (SALIGAN).

**The proposed pilot project** will be implemented by FDUP, in partnership with QC UP-All and the consortium of NGOs mentioned above. The project will strengthen and consolidate city-wide urban poor organizations and build their alliances with each other and with their local barangay (sub-district) authorities through the implementation of actual community-initiated and community-managed land tenure and community upgrading projects and the creation of a revolving fund for Housing that will provide support for these community-driven tenure and upgrading projects and leverage additional funds from barangay and city funds and promote savings among the peoples organization.

- **Small projects** : 1 small project proposed (\$3,000)
- **Big projects** : 1 big housing project proposed (\$40,000)
- **Special proposed City Process project** : FDUP proposes a special project to map and survey all the poor settlements in District 2 and to prepare poor communities in Quezon City District 2 to develop their city agenda to enable them to actively participate in the upcoming public hearings on (1) city budgeting, (2) comprehensive development planning and (3) city land use planning. Proposed budget = \$3,000 (mapping) + \$5,000 (planning preparation) - TOTAL \$8,000.
- **Approval details** : Project approved in principal, but will need to provide specific details about the small and big projects in next committee meeting. **TOTAL \$54,000**

**PILOT CITY 2. Manila - Tondo Districts 1 and 2** (Proposal by Urban Poor Associates - UPA) The proposed pilot project in the city of Manila (one of 13 municipalities in the Metro Manila area) will promote various activities that will help poor people attain land tenure security and basic services, will build a city-wide federation of urban poor groups that can negotiate with the mayor on land and housing issues and other issues, will influence the mayor to adopt something similar to the Urban Development and Local Housing Board of Naga City, will form a poor people's agenda for the City of Manila, and will develop housing strategies that can become part of the City's land use plan and City Shelter Plan. The principal methodology will be community organization, which over the years worked with the following problems: water, light, garbage disposal, sanitation, housing, evictions, land tenure security, schools and practical medical help, such as, immunization programs. These are all local and soluble by the people.



- **Small projects** : Propose \$6,000 for small projects in first-year budget (no specific community details)

- **Big projects** : Propose \$10,000 first-year budget for housing in reclamation area, one of the "Presidential Proclamation" sites declared by the President to be used for low income housing development.
- **Special proposed "City Profile" project** : UPA proposes a budget of \$6,500 for preparing a "City Profile" with information about urban poor communities in Manila. The results of the city profiling will feed into urban poor agenda setting of the PO alliance in Manila.
- **Approval details** : Approved in principal the City Profile project and a budget of \$6,000 for at least two small projects and \$10,000 for one big project, but will need to provide specific details about small and big projects in the next meeting. **TOTAL \$25,500**

**PILOT CITY 3 : Iligan City and Kauswagan** (Proposal by Sentro sa Maayong Magbalantay, Inc - SMMI, a local NGO) In Iligan City, there are 44 slums (with 62,179 households, 310,000 people) and in the nearby town of Kauswagan there are 33 slums ( 5,100 households, 23,087 people). Most of the people living in these informal settlements are "internally-displaced persons" who have been forced off their rural land by the prolonged separatist civil conflict in Mindanao. At the same time, there are growing land-use conflicts in these two cities, as these inner-city poor communities find themselves facing eviction because of city development projects.



SMMI estimates that 89% of these settlements are in immediate danger of eviction, 12,394 households are still homeless, 6,746 households have recently arrived from war and flood-affected villages, and 13,711 households need upgrading. The proposed project will build on the existing collaborative mechanisms in the two cities between the local government, the communities, civil society organizations, the church and the business sector. SMMI will take the lead in the implementation of the project but in collaboration with urban poor organizations and housing associations with the support of the local government units and key government agencies. The project seeks to promote stronger alliances among these urban poor communities in both cities, to provide opportunities for them to resolve their serious problems of land, housing, basic services and jobs, and to strengthen their confidence and their relationship with the local government in the process.

- **Small projects** : No small projects proposed yet
- **Big projects** : One housing project of about 40,000 \$ proposed
- **Approval details** : The idea is approved in principal of developing a strategy for bringing together the scattered "IDP" people in Iligan, starting savings, survey, etc. and developing small upgrading projects and a big housing project to build communities for the scattered poor war torn area. But the proposal will need to be re-worked and more details about the process will need to be developed, to re-submit later.

**PILOT CITY 4 : Mandaue City** (Proposal by the Homeless People's Federation Philippines - HPFP) This pilot involves a large relocation project in which the Homeless People's Federation has already gotten a large piece of public land, and are in the process of developing it as a housing project for communities facing eviction. The ACCA program will tentatively provide strategic support to this project, which is already under implementation. With a clearer idea of how the ACCA project is oriented, the federation will prepare details about this pilot (and possibly another one in Quezon City) in the next ACCA meeting in April 2009.

- **Small projects** : No proposed small projects yet
- **Big projects** : No proposed project yet
- **Approval details** : The HPFP group will develop this proposal for Mandaue with more details and clearer small and big projects and submit it at the April 2009 meeting. At that time, they will also propose two other pilot cities: One barangay in Quezon City (which includes Payatas garbage dump), and the Mount Mayon volcano disaster area.

## 7. VIET NAM (2 pilot cities - Viet Tri and Vinh)

The key idea for Viet Nam is to use the real needs on the ground and the small and big projects as interventions. The two pilot cities (Viet Tri and Vinh) have been proposed because there are evictions of communities going on in both of them. There is a great need to start housing projects, but these cities don't have funds, and the CDFs in each city are a little stiff because of the process which has been more controlled by the municipality and the Women's Union than by the communities themselves. If we are going to help these funds to address the housing needs, how can we do it in such a way as to adjust the existing system so that it can open more space to people and create a kind of collaboration that is more a partnership of equals than like a vertical hierarchy? If this can happen, the new funds will help support poor communities' participation and trigger a new change.



In both cities, the process has emerged from specific needy projects, but the way the ACCA funds will flow is this: the funds will first go to the ACVN (Association of Cities of Viet Nam), which will have a special unit (in the form of a national community development fund - CDF) to oversee the overall national program. ACVN will support the people on the ground to work with their cities to implement the housing and upgrading projects, with support from ACCA. The funds from ACCA will go directly to this ACVN national CDF, and this national CDF will pass the loans and grants to the cities or to the communities directly. In this way, ACVN will act as a new kind of umbrella for the communities to work together with their city authorities.

### PILOT CITY 1 : Viet Tri

- **Small projects** : proposed 3 small projects
- **Big project** : The proposed big housing project in Viet Tri involves a group of 97 poor families who are being evicted from a large workers housing colony at Nong Trang Ward, which is being demolished and redeveloped under a provincial-level plan. 377 households will be able to stay there, but will have to pay for their new houses and land rights in the redeveloped community. But the 97 families are those whose houses will not be replaced, to make way for roads and infrastructure in the redeveloped area. The government has provided land for relocating these 97 families, but instead of making an expensive, government-planned and government-built housing project there, the people are proposing to plan and develop their own housing project, with help from the ACCA program, and by doing so to demonstrate a cheaper, more people-friendly and community-managed alternative housing model.

### PILOT CITY 2 : Vinh

- **Small projects** : proposed 3 small projects
- **Big project** : The proposed big housing project in Vinh involves another eviction of poor families from the social housing block they used to occupy, which is being demolished and redeveloped as market-rate housing. The government has allocated some land for these evicted families, and the people will plan and develop their own new housing there. Details are yet to be worked out, though, so the project will not be proposed yet.

• **Approval details** : Approved in principal \$18,000 for small projects (\$9,000 per city), while the project is developed and big projects are planned. But will need details about the process and project details. **TOTAL \$24,000**

## 8. SRI LANKA (2 pilot cities proposed by Sevanatha + Women's Bank)



**PILOT CITY 1 : Nuwara Eliya.** This small city in the central highlands of Sri Lanka, is a center for tea growing, and used to be called "Little England", since its cool hill climate made it a popular hill station for British colonials. During the colonial period, the British brought a lot of Tamil workers who were brought from India to work in the large tea estates, which have since been broken up into small tea gardens. The city still has a lot of poor tea-garden workers (many of them descendants of these Tamil migrant workers), most of them living in the city's population lives in 36 slum and squatter settlements (2,041 families), without land tenure and in extremely bad conditions without toilets, water supply, drainage or electricity. Some of these settlements are run-down housing built originally to house the tea plantation workers, and some are more recent squatter settlements. The Women's Bank (a national movement of women's savings groups with 70,000 members around Sri Lanka) has already started savings groups in many of these settlements, and the proposed city-wide pilot in Nuwara Eliya will build on this Women's Bank process, which works as a kind of guarantee that the process will be sustained in the long term.

- **5 small projects proposed @ \$3,000 each** (no specific community details given) Total budget = \$15,000
- **No big housing project proposed, but did propose \$40,000 for city housing revolving fund to solve housing of the urban poor for the whole city which already have strong Women Bank process**

**PILOT CITY 2 : Moratuwa.** This tsunami-hit city on the southwest coast of Sri Lanka, has since the disaster become another important area of work by both of the national women's savings movements: Women's Bank and Women's Development Bank Federation.

- **5 small projects proposed @ \$3,000 each** (no specific community details given) Total budget = \$15,000
- **No big housing project proposed, but proposed \$40,000 for city housing fund.**

**Special proposed project :** Sevanatha proposes to update its 2002 "Poverty Profile" for Colombo, which includes a survey and mapping of all the poor settlements in Colombo. Project will include updating the information, printing the results and disseminating. Jaya will develop the project details and submit it in April.

### Approval details :

- **Nuwara Eliya :** The proposed project in Nuwara Eliya approved in principal, but need to provide specific details about small and big projects. **TOTAL \$58,000.**
- **Moratuwa :** The project in Moratuwa will be reconsidered, since working "city-wide" here may be difficult, since the WDBF/SDI are also working in many settlements in the city. Discussion will be made before proceed



## 9. MONGOLIA (3 pilot cities : Erdenet, Tunkhel and Bayanchandmani (Proposal from UDRC)

**PILOT CITY 1 : Erdenet City** (Mongolia's second-largest city)

- **Small projects** : (for street lighting, walkways, fences, planting, toilets and community center) 5 small projects @ \$3,000 = \$15,000
- **Big projects** : There need to be more details about the housing project proposed to be presented in next meeting.

**PILOT CITY 2 : Tunkhel Bag (village)** (population 3,700, 126 km from Ulaanbaatar. In this village, 100% of the population live in ger areas.)

- **Small projects** : (for saw-dust fuel making, stove improvement, bio-toilet, street paving, greening, saw-dust cement block making) 5 small projects @ \$3,000 = \$15,000
- **Big projects** : No big project proposed yet.

**PILOT CITY 3 : Bayanchandmani Sum (District) - This is a "district-wide" upgrading pilot** (this district, which is one of 20 districts in Tuv Province, is 72 kms from Ulaanbaatar, and has a population of 3,798 people - 1,093 households. 97% of these people live in unserviced ger areas.)

- **Small projects** : (develop pilot street, develop model pattern of ger plot, income generation by vegetable planting, day care center) 5 small projects @ \$3,000 = \$15,000
- **Big projects** : No big project proposed yet.

**Approval TOTAL (for 3 cities) \$54,000**



## 10. FIJI (Pilot city: Suva - Proposal by ECREA and the People's Community Network)

**PILOT CITY : Suva.** This proposal comes from the People's Community Network (a growing network of informal communities and their savings groups) and their NGO supporter (ECREA). One of the main issues being faced by communities that are members of the People's Community Network (so far active only in Fiji's capital city of Suva) is eviction. If they are unable to gain secure land tenure where they are, the government or the Housing Authority relocates them to areas on the outskirts of the city where there are few schools, little transport and no opportunities for employment.

The proposed pilot project in Suva seeks to develop a community-managed alternative process for resolving these serious land and housing issues of those being evicted or relocated.

- **1 small project** : Project to develop a road which will benefit 9 poor communities in the Wailoku area of Suva. The total cost of the project will be \$9,000, of which \$6,000 will come from the people and the government and \$3,000 will come from ACCA. **Total budget proposed = \$3,000**





- **1 big project** : To help buy a large piece of private land for relocating evicted squatter families. The total land cost is \$200,000 and the \$40,000 proposed to ACCA will be enough to make a down payment on the land.
- **Approval details** : The small road project is approved (\$3,000). But the committee felt that the purchasing of expensive private land for relocating squatters may set a bad precedent, the committee would like Fiji Suva Federation and ECREA to consider finding ways for the government to provide land for evicted communities, and use the ACCA big project funds for housing loans and leveraging. **Approved : TOTAL \$6,000**

## SUMMARY :

**Budget approved in principal on February 28, 2009**

*All figure in US Dollars*

Country	City	Total budget approved	Big projects (max \$40,000)	Small projects (max \$3,000 each)	City process (max \$3,000)	Underst anding cities	Other city processes	Disaster
1. Cambodia	Serey Sophoan	49,000	40,000	6,000 (2)	3,000		10,000 (country survey)	
	Samrong	49,000	40,000	6,000 (2)	3,000			
	Country survey	10,000						
	National process support	10,000						
2. Indonesia	Surabaya	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	Makassar	43,000	40,000	--	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
3. Nepal	Bharatpur	56,800	40,000	13,800 (5)	3,000			
	Biratnagar	43,000	40,000	--	3,000			
	Natinoal process support	10,000						
4. Burma	Yangon	83,800	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000			25,800
	National process support	10,000						
5. Korea	Seoul	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
6. Philippines	Quezon City	54,000	40,000	3,000 (1)	3,000	5,000	3,000	
	Manila	25,500	10,000	6,000 (2)	3,000		6,500	
	National process support	10,000						
7. Viet Nam	Viet Tri	12,000	--	9,000 (3)	3,000			
	Vinh	12,000	--	9,000 (3)	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
8. Sri Lanka	Nuwara Eliya	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
9. Mongolia	Erdenet City	18,000	--	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	Tunkhel village	18,000	--	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	Bayanchandmani District	18,000	--	15,000 (5)	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
10. Fiji	Suva	6,000		3,000 (1)	3,000			
	National process support	10,000						
<b>TOTAL (10 countries)</b>	<b>17 Cities</b>	<b>772,100</b>	<b>410,000</b> <i>(11 projects)</i>	<b>160,800</b> <i>(54 projects)</i>	<b>51,000</b> <i>(17 cities)</i>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>25,800</b>

# NOTES on the Nepal visit:

**Notes on the Nepal visit and ACHR / ACCA meeting  
February 25 - 28, 2009**

*This report presents detailed notes on some of the discussions which took place and the communities that were visited during the first ACCA Program committee meeting, held in Nepal between Feb 25 and 28, 2009.*

*When we began discussing how this new regional program would be coordinated, one of the first agreements we reached was that each ACCA committee meeting would be held in a different country. The idea was that going to many different countries and cities like this, and focusing on a different place and a different set of political and social realities every time the committee meets, would be a way of boosting the learning, keeping the program grounded in local realities and turning the ACCA committee meetings into a kind of advanced, rotating regional university. So here are the class notes from the first class in Nepal!*



- **Feb. 25:** Participants arrive in Kathmandu. A briefing by Prafulla and Lajana on the situation in Nepal.
- **Feb. 26:** Bus ride to Bharatpur, field visits to Bharatpur squatter settlements and community improvement projects, dialogue with Bharatpur communities and municipality
- **Feb. 27:** Return to Kathmandu. Afternoon, detailed discussion of ACCA Program
- **Feb. 28:** Presentation of ACCA proposals. Committee discusses proposals and makes approvals.

## **PART 1 : A note on the situation in Nepal right now**

*Prafulla Pradhan and Lajana Manandar give the visitors a briefing  
February 25, 2009*

*There is an old saying in Nepal : "In Nepal there are more gods than people, more festivals than days of the year and more temples than houses."*

- **Nepal's population is 27 million people. Kathmandu's population is 3 - 4 million.**
- **25,000 - 30,000 NGOs are registered in Nepal.** Lajana says this list includes community based organizations. Many are bogus, set up by politicians to get hold of donor money. Many of the real ones are rural. Lumanti is one of the only urban poor NGOs.

### **Background :**

- **1990s : Multi-party system and elections were introduced** in Nepal, after centuries of absolute rule by the monarchy, and earlier by smaller kingdoms. The king was still the king, but he voluntarily gave up power in order to allow this new, more democratic style of government to come into Nepal, with a lot of influence from India.
- **1996-2006 : Civil war.** Armed movement of Maoists, especially in rural areas. Most of Nepal's remote areas had received no benefits from the country's development and were not being looked after. Many of the country's citizens lived in extreme poverty as they had lived for hundreds of

years, with no effect of any development at all - no education, no medical care, no welfare, no governance, no electricity, no water, no roads. Problems of caste and landlessness persisted, while some big landlords continued to own huge amounts of the country's land while the country's management was dominated by a Brahmin elite. This all made a fertile soil for the Maoist movement, which gradually took over almost all of Nepal's rural area, and controlled most villages. Why? Because most people seemed to feel the Maoists could actually do something to bring about some change. *Most of the Maoist soldiers were women!*

- **2006 - 2009 : Peace agreement, elections, monarchy abolished, new elections held, coalition government formed with Maoists in majority.** After the peace agreement, so many international organizations and UN here, to take part in the "post-conflict situation" and "nation-building" exercises. King deposed, monarchy abolished, elections held. Now coalition government is 40% Maoists, and the rest from all the other old parties. As part of the coalition agreement, the president is from the Congress Party, the vice president is from the Terai Party and the Prime Minister is Maoist.

**All the problems created during all these upheavals have accumulated and are now coming out.** Market prices of everything are going up sharply. Nepal is going through a period of severe scarcities. There are serious water supply problems all over the country, but especially in the Kathmandu Valley. The electricity supply is cut for 16 hours of the day. Petrol and cooking gas are also becoming very difficult to get. Land prices are also going up, especially in urban areas. The gap between the wealthy urban people and villagers in the hilly areas and terai areas of the country is growing wider - it's a gap of income, of opportunity, of poverty, education, health - everything!



**The market system is coming in a big way.** As the management of most public services like schools, hospitals and clinics breaks down, a new trend is for expensive private hospitals and schools which cater to those who can afford them - the new affluent urban elite. There are opportunities in Nepal, for those with money. This is only further widening the social gap.

**No elected mayors for the last 7 years, so the power in cities is in the hands of the national ministry, not with the local people :** Seven years ago, during the upheavals, all the mayors were removed from office and the running of cities in Nepal was taken over by bureaucrats from the central and local government. This system will remain until a framework for electing new mayors and local governments is developed in the new constitution - which will take another two years. As a result, the power in cities is now almost entirely with the Ministry - NOT with the local people. With the new coalition government, this is further complicated by the fact that all major decisions made in the country's various cities have to be approved by members of ALL the political parties in the coalition!

**QUESTION : Nepal is now the only Maoist country in Asia, but there seems to be no management in the country. Why?** The Maoists want the hearts of the country's poor, and they want to "revolutionize land reform" - but have been able to do nothing yet. Until very recently, the Maoists were an underground guerilla fighting force - they were fighters, they have no experience with government or with managing a country. And they have a strong distrust of the old bureaucracy. So Nepal has a double problem with this new government! Plus, there are 70 political parties active in Nepal now. Parties dominate the political and power scene here, and they are very competitive with each other - community leaders get pulled into this push-and-pull and communities get divided as a result.

**QUESTION : Any hope? Any strength or any possibilities in all this mess?**

- **There is now a new constitution being written in Nepal,** which will be finished in 2 years. Lajana says the process is VERY participatory. The national assembly members are all going

back to all the remote villages to explain about the process to local people and get their ideas. Lots of lobbying by different interest groups to get their various "rights" into the constitution. After the new constitution is ratified, there will be a fresh round of elections.

- **The monarchy has been abolished**, and on Feb. 25, the Naranhiti Royal Palace became a public museum and was opened up to visitors.
- **The media has become very powerful.**
- **Community savings is booming!** Now community savings is very common, and is practiced everywhere. Many civil society organizations are now promoting community savings and credit groups. It answers people everyday immediate needs, and is a system they can manage themselves, and so it is somewhat independent of all these larger political and economic upheavals that continue to knock Nepal back and forth.

## **PART 2 : The trip to Bharatpur**

*This is one of Nepal's proposed pilot cities for the ACCA Program  
February 26, 2009*

**The fabulous bus trip to Bharatpur along the Trishula River :** It takes about five hours to make the 150km trip to Bharatpur by bus from Kathmandu, and the journey takes us along the spectacular Trishula River valley. A great deal of the steep mountainsides we pass are cultivated, with centuries-old terraces which Lajana says must be constantly tended to, repaired and shored up to keep them from wearing away. On these narrow shelves of land that climb the hills like steps, the farmers grow wheat, millet, corn, rice, cauliflower, mustard greens and who-knows-what all vegetables. It is so humbling to see how these mountain people have been able to transform such steep mountainsides into beautifully green terraces which yield such bounties!



**We pass stone houses along the road** where some people have set up little wayside tea shops, their wood-stoves and pavements neatly plastered with a mixture of red soil and dung (Lajana says that many of these roadside people are squatters from rural areas who will not be allowed to stay here long). Strange that in the middle of nowhere we see a group of neatly-combed and uniformed schoolchildren plodding home on the road margins with their heavy book bags. Goats, bamboo, pampas grass, flame of the forest trees, little black-faced monkeys, the aromas of diesel and curry, old women trudging along with bundles of sticks on their heads.

**Nepal's Community Forests :** Nepal has one of the world's most successful and well-known community forest systems. In the 1960s and 70s, there were huge problems of deforestation in Nepal, when the government managed the country's forests and gave out huge tracts of forest on concession to wealthy business people and foreign companies to log. But the forests all over the country were brought back into vivid health when they were turned over to communities in one of the world's pioneering and most successful community forest programs.

## About the town of **BHARATPUR** (also called Narayanghat)



Bharatpur is the provincial capital (a "3rd level city") of Chitwan District, not far from the border of India and adjacent to the huge Chitwan National Forest, with a population of 13,000 people. The town is located at the junction of several important roads leading to Kathmandu, India and other parts of Nepal, and also at the junction of three rivers (the big, green Narayani River flows through the town). So a lot of the city's bustle and business is related to transport moving of goods, timber, agriculture products to and from India and Kathmandu. Legend has it that Parvati (Shiva's wife) stopped here for a night.

**A city of bicycles :** There are many trucks and buses which pass through Bharatpur, on the way to and from somewhere else, but the town's main vehicles are bicycles and cycle-rickshaws. Prafulla tells us that when marriages are arranged in Bharatpur, one of the first questions the boy's family will ask the girl's family is, "*Does she know how to ride a bicycle?*"

**Lumanti working in Bharatpur since 2006 :** Lumanti has been working in Bharatpur since April 2006 (under a Misereor-funded project to expand to three provincial cities) and has three staff members working here to support the community process there, but there are several community volunteers who help manage the Community Resource Center, which is located in Ganeshthan, the town's largest squatter settlement. Singh Bahadur Lama is a young man who grew up in one of the slums in Kathmandu, got involved in Lumanti's youth group activities years ago, and after completing his education came to work for Lumanti. For several years now, Singh has been the lead community worker in Bharatpur, and is very close with the local communities and the federation members. Besides supporting the women's savings cooperative process, Lumanti has helped the communities to make environmental and infrastructure improvements (mostly water supply and sanitation) in 12 settlements (with support from Water Aid and Action Aid) and developed children's education programs. It's clear that the municipal council people are happy with Lumanti's work and the partnership seems strong.

**Both federations are active in Bharatpur :**

- **The National Federation of Squatter Communities** (*Nepal Basobas Basti Samrochan Samaj*) is active in all 40 districts in Nepal - some districts more active than others.
- **The Women's Savings Cooperative Network** (*Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj*) now includes 18 cooperatives around the country, which does a lot of inter-lending.
- **The two federations work closely together:** the men focusing on negotiations, dealing with eviction situations and lobbying for land tenure, and the women focusing on savings and credit and day-to-day matters in the poor communities.

**One cooperative acts as an umbrella for all 12 women's savings groups in Bharatpur :** Mrs. Rama Adhikary is chairperson of the Women's Savings and Credit Cooperative in Bharatpur (she came to the Jan 2009 ACHR meeting in Bangkok). She tells us that there are active women's savings groups in all 12 communities that are so far in the network, with 600 members, and they have come together under the umbrella of a single registered cooperative. The Community Resource Center in Ganeshthan serves as the cooperative's office, where one treasurer from each community brings the day's savings each day. The cooperative meets monthly in the co-op office.

- **Now pushing beyond savings and income**



**generation into housing, upgrading and land tenure** : Mrs. Rama tells us that after the Bangkok meeting in January, the women's saving cooperative and the federation in Bharatpur organized a big meeting and decided together to expand their work beyond savings.

- **Question: How do the women's federation and the squatters federation relate to each other?** Mrs. Rama answers, *We have very good coordination among ourselves! But we divide the work: the women work more on the practical level, and we deal with needs in the communities, while the men focus more on policy.*
- **Question from Wardah** : Are the women's and men's federations contributing to the new Nepali constitution? Yes, the national squatters federation is involved in trying to get public land for landless people.

**Just finished a new survey ("poverty mapping") of squatter settlements in Bharatpur** : Mr. Manprasad is the chairman of the Bharatpur city chapter of the national squatter federation. He briefs us about this at the Community Resource Center in Ganeshtan.

- **There are a total of 56 slum communities in Bharatpur**, of which 23 settlements have been identified as "vulnerable" (*does this mean squatters?*) during the in Bharatpur poverty mapping.
- **12 of these 23 vulnerable settlements are part of the network, so far.**
- **Most of the squatter settlements in Bharatpur are located on land under the national forest**, which accounts for much of the peripheral land around the city.

**Bharatpur Citizens Forum** : Lumanti has also helped establish a citizen's forum in Bharatpur to advocate for urban poverty and housing issues in the city. The forum includes municipal and provincial government agencies, NGOs, local elites, and also includes the two people's federations. The idea was to develop something like the URC in Karachi.

**We visit five settlements in Bharatpur on February 26 :**

## **1. Jakhadimai Community** (inauguration ceremony of new water supply system)

This is a squatter settlement of 172 households, on Forestry Department land on the town's periphery, was able to negotiate for secure land here. The city's water supply grid does not yet reach this part of town, and so water has for long been the number one problem here. On the day we visit, the community people had organized the inauguration of a brand new water supply system that the community people built, with support from Lumanti, the local government, Water-Aid and Action Aid.

**How the water supply system works** : The system includes a deep well, from which water is pumped up to two plastic tanks set on top of a tall steel tower, and from there is piped by gravity flow to the households in two adjacent communities. The system cost 1.4 million Rupees (about US\$ 18,000).



**Inauguration ceremony** : As honored guests, we are given flowers, presented with ceremonial silk scarves, sat down and given tea and biscuits while the various community leaders and invited dignitaries from the city and support agencies give their speeches (The municipality officer, who came to the ACHR meeting in Bangkok, says the Municipal Council will continue to support these kinds of projects...). The community women are all in their best sarees, and many of the savings group members wear matching blue sarees, with their necklaces of glittering red and green beads (*which Lajana tells us are a sign that they're married!*).

We are invited to go around and make the auspicious first turn of the taps - in the front of each is a little copper pot painted with yellow and red stripes and topped with flowers. Everyone cheers and claps and photos are snapped when the water flows out! This is the first water supply system which links all 172 households together. It is a sign of real improvement taking place in these forest squatter communities. Communities are also being the main actors in taking care of this water system.

## 2. Ganeshthan (Community Resource Center)

This is Bharatpur's largest squatter settlement, with about 600 households, on forest land. People here are laborers and wood sellers. This community is about 45 years old, but there was a big wave of landless people moving in about 20 years ago. People have little vegetable gardens, but seem very poor, and many of the houses are made only of mud plastered bamboo. Lumanti has helped build a community resource center here, which is the town's headquarters for the federations and the community work. There was a drainage project here, with support from Lumanti.



**The eerie sight of dead sal trees in the communities :** There is a very strange thing about many of these squatter settlements in Bharatpur, on the edge of the forest: many have the dead trunks of these very tall native *Sal* trees rising 20 - 30 meters into the sky throughout the community. These trees have had all their branches cut off, so they look like weird black columns rising over the houses, which suddenly look very tiny. The people say that the branches break off in the wind and if they fall on a house, it can crush the house and kill people - the wood is very hard and heavy.

## 3. Salyani (proposed for ACCA pilot housing project)



This small and very poor squatter settlement of 30 houses is located right next to the "buffer zone" of the national forest (this "buffer zone" is managed as a community forest). It is a new community, the people have lived here for less than ten years. Many are casual laborers. All the houses, which are arranged in a long line along the road, are made of mud, thatch and bamboo - not a single brick and concrete house in the community. The land is low-lying, and in the areas behind the houses, there are some swampy bits. Flooding problems during the monsoon.

When we arrive, a marquee has been set up on a little piece of land at the end of the community where they will eventually build a community center (which is being partly funded by the Community Forest Department), and we have a meeting with the community people and municipal officials there.



**But each house has its own low-cost toilet :** Nad (community architect from Thailand) helped the people here to design and build some extremely inexpensive toilets, using a system in which 5 families share a single septic tank (with three chambers), and each family builds a simple enclosure around its own pour-flush pan. People used traditional building materials and methods to enclose their toilets (woven bamboo, mud and dung plaster, thatched roofs and simple curtains made of recycled gunny bags - almost free!). Everyone calls these the *Nad toilets!* Support for this project from Lumanti,



**Land belongs to the National Forest Department : People allowed to stay, but no formal land tenure :**

The Forest Department, the Municipal Council and the political parties who jointly run the city now (in the absence of a mayor) have met and agreed to allow the people at Salyani to stay here. They tell us that they are working towards getting the people individual land title (Somsook proposes collective title as better!), but have not yet given them formal land tenure or land titles. We're told the Municipality can't make this decision themselves. The city has also agreed to allow the pilot housing upgrading project to be implemented here, and have agreed to the per-family plot size, which the people

have decided will be the same for all 30 households. Wardah later learns from one of the municipal officials that there are plans to build a ring road on this land eventually - which will cover a 30m wide strip of land beside the forest buffer zone, which would wipe out the entire community. In exchange for being allowed to stay here, the Salyani community has agreed to protect the adjacent forest and not encroach on it.

**Rajendra Darji** is a young man who lives in Salyani, who has just completed his 10th standard, and he speaks to the meeting: *We have already changed this place with the new toilets, but in three years time this will be a model community for Asia!*

## 4. Lanku Community (biogas plant)

This small slum community of 17 poor households who work as laborers, cycle rickshaw drivers and small vendors. The people stayed here as squatters for 9 years, but when the city wanted to build a small bus parking lot, each family was given a small piece of adjacent land, with secure land tenure. The community had no toilets or water taps, and there is only one municipal toilet opposite the bus park, but it's so dirty and broken down that nobody uses it. Besides helping start an active savings group here, Lumanti has built one hand-pump (which all the houses share) and some toilets (12,000 Rupees each), has set up a child learning center and runs a child program. The latest improvement project was a biogas plant. The raw sewage, gray water from all 16 houses is piped into the system, but this isn't enough waste to make the system work, so they have to add the kitchen waste of 150 surrounding houses. Every house pays 200 Rupees a month for the system, and they get biogas (for cooking?). The system cost 500,000 Rupees (US\$ 7,000) to build. (support from Lumanti, Water Aid, Action Aid).





## 5. Naryani Path Community (dinner and meeting with Municipal Council members)

This is an old squatter settlement of 42 houses built along the raised banks of the beautiful, clean Naryani River, right in the middle of town. All the visitors are astonished that this community has not yet been evicted, from this land which must be so valuable!

**Municipal improvements in the Naryani Path Community :** The municipal council (?) has built a septic tank system for the 42 houses in the community and built a stone and concrete embankment ("pucca ghat") between the community and the river, which creates a very nice public space along the river for washing clothes, fishing, playing, evening strolling, etc.



## Meeting with Municipal Council and community members (at Naryani Path)



We are shown into a big, dim room overlooking the river, where a roaring generator in the next room gives us enough power to light a single fluorescent tube overhead and to power the laptops and projectors necessary to show some power points.

**Municipal council presents a PowerPoint about the city :** The total population of Bharatpur is about 130,000 (17,500 households), and the city's piped drinking water supply system reaches only 30% of this population now. Problems of rapid urbanization, high levels of immigration, urban poverty, squatter settlements and lack of municipal resources. Are now

planning a big sewer system in the city (with ADB loan), since all the city's raw sewage now flows untreated into that beautiful Naryani River!

### An idea proposed by Somsook : To get Rs 20 million from the central government for a Bharatpur city fund for city-wide community upgrading :

- **Somsook congratulates the city on a good start** with the 12 communities that are now active and involved in savings, improvement projects and networking. Now how to make Bharatpur into a model pilot city and get all 56 (23?) poor communities in the city involved? Would it be possible to get Rs 20 million (about US\$ 250,000 perhaps) from the central government for Bharatpur, as a revolving fund? Then all these communities can use this revolving fund to help them solve their squatting and eviction problems, find land themselves, start their housing improvements with support from this revolving fund. This way, we could solve the city's poor housing problems in three years! Would that be possible?
- **Somsook : We need to solve these problems in a more comprehensive scale :** Most upgrading projects are done in a scattered way: The city presentation showed that Bharatpur is growing at 7% every year! These small, scattered improvement projects here and there can't ever keep up with that growth!
- **This Rs 20 million starter fund would help link together all these poor communities** - and new coming poor people in the city - and build their strength to bring into the finding of solutions to these serious housing problems, together with the city. This fund can make Bharatpur a pilot city to solve housing problems for all of Nepal!

**Municipal Council officer :** But are these poor people *really landless*? How do we know they haven't got land back in their villages? Are they really poor? That's the challenge. The Municipal Council has recognized these 23 poor settlements, and we are working on supporting them now, but we are worried about these new migrants. If we provide good land and houses for all the poor in the city, will this encourage more to come? When will they stop coming?

**Kirtee makes a noble pitch for people having good reasons to migrate to cities**, even if they do have land in the villages, because of poverty, natural disasters, crop failures, droughts, etc.

**Somsook :** This is what we have been hearing that same question from governments all over Asia! People come to the city not because of housing only and if they can live in their homeland they will not come to city. Besides, we are proposing a possible solutions not proposing giving anyone houses for free! But how to find finance for people's development and only about giving these communities loans - people will pay themselves - and using municipal land for their housing.



**Municipal council guy :** The Municipality has a budget of Rs 7 million (US\$ 90,000) which we will use to make infrastructure improvements and capacity building for these 23 communities in the next five months. But the other communities are not recognized by the municipality! We can't invest in all 56 - just these 23 we've identified in our poverty mapping!

**Somsook :** In our experiences the small improvement or capacity building activities and support may not be able to solve real structural problems of the poor. Communities will still be insecure and poor, and the problems only get worse. But if we can start with land and houses, and work in such a way as you can unleash the power of people in this city, all the other problems will take care of themselves. It seems the people in Nepal are waking up! This is a new Nepal! That may not want a little of this and a little of that, they want to develop and bring themselves out of poverty.

**Small projects in other countries :** Somsook presents a slide show on small projects - which poor community people plan and implement themselves with small grant budgets - in other Asian countries. Projects like road paving, drainage, water supply systems, toilets, canal cleaning, tree-planting, walkways and bridges, community centers.

- It's not just a matter of providing certain needed infrastructure improvements, but it's getting people in a poor community working together and getting them in a solving-their-own-problems mode.
- These kinds of small projects the ACCA program will support communities into activity and then can develop into bigger issues like land and housing, etc.
- More slides showing city-wide upgrading under the Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Program in Thailand, as an example.

**Taking the bus back to the hotel in Bharatpur :** The electricity seems to be out on the short bus ride trip back to the hotel. Bharatpur looks dusty and shabby by daylight, but by night it looks positively post-apocalyptic. No streetlights, no moon. A few darkly swaddled figures shuffle along darkened streets and disappear into doorways from which no light comes. Not even any dogs out!

## **Impressions from the visiting group : (about the situation in Bharatpur)**

**Dr. Liem :** This is the right target group, the process is already moving and the government officials are ready to talk, show some positive energy. The problem is there is still a gap between the officials and the target group, needs some intermediation.

**Ana Oliveros :** When Somsook proposed the government put 20 million Rupees into a new city fund for the poor, they didn't refuse, but they're afraid such a fund would encourage more "invasions" of poor migrants. The concept of using the fund to unite the communities and solve the housing problems of the whole city is a difficult concept for the government to understand. It's a new way of working. Need to continue the conversation.

**Lajana :** Don't worry too much about unenthusiastic reaction of the officer or about his typical bureaucratic attitude towards improving slums! He was just posted to Bharatpur a few weeks ago. In six months time, he will probably be gone, and another person will replace him. That's how the system works now, when cities are being managed by the central government, which is itself being managed by a complicated coalition of parties, all of which have to agree before anything can be decided or done. Until we get back our system of mayors and autonomous local governments, this will be the system we have to deal with.

**Somsook :** *In Thailand's upgrading program, in fact, we started with the fund, not with land.* And we used the fund as a tool to back up and help people negotiate for land, little by little. It could probably work the same way in Bharatpur, and in other cities.

**Lajana :** It doesn't happen all at once. Now people are more organized, are making more demands to the government. The government recognizes the work of the federations more and is cooperating more. The door is more open than it was earlier, when we had to get the Municipality's permission to start work here. Originally, the Municipality chose the 12 poorest communities where we were allowed to work. The government is now willing to give the people permission to use the land they now occupy at Salyani. I know this is a temporary solution, but it is a step in the right direction.

**Somsook :** The emergence of the federation and the women's cooperative in Bharatpur is crucial. As is Lumanti's programs to support savings groups and small infrastructure improvements here.

- ***The hungry tigers are coming!*** Nepal is just now over its long civil war, and the new government is trying to establish a new Nepal. But the country is without a doubt entering into that stage where the big development forces and investments will start coming into the country. *The hungry tigers are coming!* And with this investment and this development will come the laying of big roads, the development of big infrastructure projects, the emergence of real estate speculation, the rising land values, and all the evictions and displacement of poor communities that always go with those developments.



**Kirtee :** **Lumanti has quite a presence in the city**, in both the communities and in the Municipality. There is a visible rapport between Lumanti and the communities and between Lumanti and the city government. The municipal officials told us they are happy with Lumanti, that it's the best NGO and that they are all learning from Lumanti. But you could do with some better technical assistance - the amount of steel that went into that water tank tower at Jakhadimai! You could have saved a lot of money with a little more careful engineering!

**Ruby :** **Yes, the municipality talked a lot about Lumanti, but not about the people's federations.** Why is it that the name of the community federations was never mentioned in the meeting? And why did we hear no voice coming from all the community people sitting at the back of the room?

**Lajana :** **The people do all the work, not Lumanti.** There are two federations in Bharatpur - the squatters federation and the women's federation of savings groups and cooperatives. These federations and the communities are the ones who actually do all the work - Lumanti only provides the support.

**Somsook :** **We have to remember that this kind of event is a political stage :** In the big meeting to inaugurate the water supply system at Jakhadimai, the politicians were talking to Lumanti and us visitors, they weren't talking to the community people. We have to remember that these kinds of events are a political stage. We can use these events to consciously make the role and presence of

the community people bigger and more prominent. We need to put the people in front, make them speak, give them credit, make them the owners and presenters. We need to build the role of people into something more important, something that is respected by politicians. If the community people are just silent beneficiaries sitting quietly in the background, it means we are failing to do this.

**Leak (Cambodia) :** We need to encourage the community people to speak more. And we should find a way to properly document their problems and plans and work, so that they have something to show the politicians. This documentation can also boost their role, their work, their central position as the main actors in all the development work. I saw their plans and management plans displayed in posters in the room, but these were not presented.

**Kirtee :** About the ring road planned where the Salyani community is now: Why on earth does a small town like Bharatpur need a ring road at all? Much less a ring road running beside an 8,000 hectare national forest? Tourism development, of course, is the first priority there, but we need to ask is such a road necessary? There is no reason why these kinds of bad plans should be accepted as facts, we can propose alternatives.

**Nepal Squatter federation national leader :**  
We won't let the government build that ring road!



**Somsook :** There is such a huge, beautiful river running right through the middle of town, filled with huge quantities of sparkling blue water from the Himalayas, yet only 30% of the city's population has piped water! The dynamic of change in Bharatpur is much faster than the city can manage or even keep up with. Twenty years ago, Bharatpur was a small town of 19,000 people, now it is ten times that big! In the conventional culture of city management, it is professionals who have to do everything, in isolation, and they simply can't keep up with this pace of growth or this scale of change. It's not only Bharatpur - it's the same thing in cities all over Asia.

- **What if we change it to be a more participatory system of managing the city**, in which the real army of people is brought into the work? The system has to change, to broaden so people on the ground can be part of the city management.
- **We should not wait for problems to happen.** The federations can invite the city government to presents its plans and talk about the development of the city. The federations may propose to the city, "How can we help you with the city's development, help make it work better?"

**Rupa :** Suggests starting housing savings. I suggest that the savings groups in the Bharatpur communities could start to allocate part of their savings specifically for housing. Because for all of us who live in poor communities, our major number one goal is building good, secure houses! In the Women's Bank system in Sri Lanka, there is one woman in each savings group who is in charge of housing, and collects the special savings for housing. They can do the same thing in Bharatpur. When resolving these kinds of land problems, it is always good to have a housing fund ready.

## **PART 3 : Discussions about the new ACCA Program**

*At the hotel back in Kathmandu, February 27, 2009*

**How to get the poor in Asian cities to "erupt" as the main actors in their own development?**

This ACCA Program is a new tool and support of building the Asian coalition - the real coalition - not just meetings, but doing and sharing and supporting each other in a bigger way, to make room for poor people in our societies.

**Somsook reviews decisions about the ACCA Program made during the Jan 2009 ACHR meeting in Bangkok :**

- Name of the new program to be called *Asian Coalition for Community Action Program (ACCA)*
- Composition of coordinating committee : To include 15 people (including representatives from 9 active countries, three community leaders, two senior people and one representative from the ACHR secretariat) Membership in the committee is flexible and can rotate within countries and with the senior and community leaders
- Revolving committee meetings : to take place every three months or so, and to be organized in a different country each time, so that the meetings to discuss and approve project proposals can also be enriched by a day or two exposure to the local process.
- Sub-regional coordination systems can be set up to help countries with the work (including community leaders and support professionals)
- National committees, national process
- Forum for Asian communities, to be held soon.

## Putting the ACCA Program in context :

The development agencies and governments are seeking to help the poor people most adversely affected by these developments. And the groups represented in this room are the ones who are finding the way, making plans and getting support to these poor people. In some ways we help quite a lot. But compared to the scale of these ever-increasing problems, these efforts of ours may not be sufficient for the larger changing context, rapid urbanization, etc.

**Also, we can see that there is a lot of growth and development of the quality in poor communities and their organizations.** Most of the countries in Asia now have some kind of community organization movement, which has helped poor communities to move from isolation and problematic situations into some kind of organized systems of mutual support. Community savings activities have been adopted and scaled up in most Asian countries now. And communities in so many countries are now linked into networks - within cities, within countries and within the whole Asia region now. We see so many projects now where communities and networks are able to start working together and start proposing the development initiatives they design to the government organizations.

**So it's clear that communities in Asia are growing, and this enthusiastic growth shows us the new strength, the new power of change.**

- ***This new emerging strength of poor people in urban and rural areas is increasing.*** Poor communities and their organizations are finding more space to take control of their lives, to be more equally involved in decisions about their own development, are becoming the key actors in making *their change* and solving *their problems* themselves, in the right direction. This is all increasing.
- ***Our societies are moving in this direction!*** Every country in Asia will have to be more open and more democratic, more or less. The space for people has to be more open - if it is not open, people will crash it and break it open!

**So how can we find that this emerging force of people becomes a new energy of big change, by people?** How to get the poor in Asian cities to "erupt" as the main actors in their own development? How can we find a way that the energy of people can link together, work with other actors and look at the development by themselves, in a larger scale, in a more managed manner, together with the knowledge and experience of the good development agencies? We link together into a new change of the whole society, the whole city - in which poor people on the ground (civic groups?) can more equally participate and solve many of the city problems.

- ***This is where the ACCA Program comes in.*** This ACCA Program is a new tool for building the Asian coalition - *the real coalition* - not just meetings, but doing and sharing and supporting each other in the region, to make room for poor people in our societies.
- ***Cities today have more problems than solutions!*** The best way to change this is to make people the most active key actors and the key participants in the development. Without this force of people being engaged in a big, city-wide way, the efforts to bring about change from the old "supply side" (i.e. initiated and done by development agencies and governments alone) will not be able to cope with the scale of problems.

## Notes on the design of the ACCA Program

**Our accumulated knowledge and experience in Asia has been consolidated and built into this program.** This program will support the work of communities in the city, and we hope that it will become a community-driven development process, which helps build and support the links between all the poor communities in the city, as much as possible.

**So the program is based in city-wide processes, not a "project-based" program,** with one project here and one project there, and all these projects scattered and independent of each other, not knowing each other. This is what happens in most of the cities in the past 20 years. But we are trying to link all the communities in a city to understand the different developments happening in their neighboring communities, as much as possible. So every project becomes part of the common knowledge and part of the city-wide learning.

- So we propose to survey all the communities in a city, link these communities together to sit, talk and see what kind of development they need and what kind of community savings and development projects they are going to undertake together. If they need water supply, then they can develop a small water supply project, with the consent of the others, then the need for housing development.

**Small upgrading projects and big housing projects should be able to link together, together with the organization of the community development funds** - at the community level and at the city level. Because these community funds will allow people a new power to make decisions by themselves - what they want to do, in the short term and long term. The fund will help support not only housing projects, but also smaller income generation and welfare activities - and many other possibilities. This is the reason why community savings, community funds, community projects and community housing should try to relate to each other, and become part of a larger whole, not in isolation. And we will use the ACCA budget for big housing projects to build these city funds, if possible. But it depends on the political situation in the city - some time we cannot do that!

**Building on what already exists :** But if we have a view that all these projects supported by this regional program will build the people's process in the various cities, building on whatever structure and capital already exists in those cities, then we can move in a more strategic direction to make change - change in the way the municipality and the government and the development agencies have done things before. We will try to build on that, into a new possibility. *This ACCA Program has been designed to help make that strategic change possible.*

### **Developing new techniques for building a change process **BY PEOPLE,** instead of by professionals like us . . .**

The strategy should not be done totally by professionals!- which is usually how we do things, because we have that knowledge and are genuinely obsessed with that. We have to develop a new technique of building the strength to make change in a big way, *from the communities*. This is probably a new technique, and a technique we need to develop all over the world. Because most of the knowledge in the world comes from the "supply side", from the theoretical side and from the professional side. But the techniques by which we ignite the strength and power and creativity of the people into a big energetic force of change need to be learned and adopted. We would like to use this ACCA Program to develop these techniques and support this change in 15 Asian countries. We want the ACCA Program to be your tool to learn, to design and to make this kind of change-by-people possible.

**The funds the ACCA Program brings may look like a lot, but compared to the scale of change we are talking about it's not very much at all.** We've been able to secure a total of about US\$ 7 million for the ACCA Program. It's big enough to cover many countries, but for the change in one country to share with several others and to achieve our target of 150 cities, this budget may not be sufficient, and not enough to solve all these big problems, but enough to ignite something significant.

**But this peanut is something very important!** Because it allows you the flexibility and the tools and seed capital (people capital and knowledge capital). So we can use this peanut - this small seed capital - to design something big, in different cities and countries. We hope that at the end of the 3-year project period, at least 12 countries will be able to be supported by this program to show the system in these countries some new alternative and some new possibilities. We have to use this program to make a strategy for the next new step.



**And it's not just a program in one country!**

Through the regional process, we have friends in so many countries to learn from and to boost our own country process. So the platform of learning and sharing is huge.

**If we can do it right, and it's powerful enough to show new possibilities, then the nature of the country development,** the nature of the donors, the nature of the international institutions that keep repeating the same old things all their lives will all be changed. We want the change of the upper level as well, but we have to make this change together - make the change process in these different countries very clear and very visible in the region. That is the only way to make the development establishment rethink and adjust their way of doing things, so poverty could be developed in the more right direction, boosted by the waking up of the people in the region.

**Kirtee : This ACCA Program is something very special - it is a paradigm shift.** This ACCA Program is not a typical conventional program that is driven by government authorities ("top-down") or by NGOs ("middle-down", though they may be participatory and community sensitive). This program is something new. In this program, people are the drivers. This program is "*bottom-up*", driven by the communities themselves and their by own initiatives. This is not easy. We are no longer talking about the conventional idea of *community participation*, in which poor people either do or don't participate in programs and projects that are conceived and implemented by NGOs and authorities! On the contrary, in this program, it is us (NGOs, professional intermediaries and government agencies) which are "participating" in projects and activities that have been initiated and are being conducted by the communities.

- ***This particular ACCA program has a different orientation,*** a different thrust and a different expectation. The emphasis in this ACCA program is on community initiative, community drive, community contribution, community skills, community resources and community leadership. And the expected outcome is not only an improved house or an upgraded slum or regular safe drinking water, it is community empowerment. We've got to keep constantly in front of our eyes that this is something new, that this involves a difficult new way of working. It is not a part of our education, it is not part of our culture of working. This is different. If we can keep that in mind, we will *quantum jump* in this program! This is a paradigm shift! *This is Obama's America, not Bush's America!*
- ***Also a community is not to be seen by itself in the program, but is to be seen in the context of all poor communities in a city.*** And a small or big project is not to be seen in isolation but in terms of what it does to improve quality of living and working environment of all city poor communities. Leveraging, scaling up, Impact on the system, policy change, learning, community capacity building, organizational synergy and stake-holder partnership for a larger systemic changes are all interwoven in this program.

## Agreements about ACCA that were reached during the Nepal meeting

**AGREEMENT 1 :** To open up these ACCA committee meetings to more people : Several of the people in the meeting felt that these committee meetings (which involve a lot of intense learning, discussion, city visits, community project visits and dialogues with local officials) were too good a learning opportunity for such a small group. So it was suggested that a greater number of people from the Asia region be allowed to participate, and we discussed how to make more room for people to take part. Finally, we agreed that from now on, each country can send two people to the committee meeting - one of whom should be a community leader. In the case of difficult and big countries like Philippines and India, or if it is necessary to add a translator, this number could be stretched to three people, at the maximum. If more people want to attend, the local groups will have to find funding to support their travel and expenses. ***But the decisions about proposals will still be made ONLY by the 15 committee members!***

**AGREEMENT 2 :** The committee agreed that each pilot city will be eligible for the following maximum budget from the ACCA Program :

- 1 BIG housing project @ \$40,000
- 5 SMALL upgrading projects @ \$3,000 each = total \$15,000
- Support for facilitating the city process: a one-time budget of \$3,000
- Support for the city seed fund : a one-time budget of \$1,000
- **TOTAL BUDGET per pilot city : \$59,000**

**AGREEMENT 3 :** To allow a great deal of flexibility in how the budget for the Small projects is managed in each city : If each city gets a maximum of \$15,000 for small projects, it's up to the city to decide how to use this budget. They may decide to use it strictly to support five small projects at \$3,000 each, or to support a greater number of projects by spreading this money further and give less to each project, for example to support 15 projects at \$1,000 each. Or, some cities might decide to make the \$15,000 into a revolving fund and instead of granting the budget to give it to communities as loans for their upgrading projects - or to give the funds as part grant and part loan. The important point is that cities and communities have the freedom to think what they want to do, and to respond to whatever they need, in whatever way works best for them. The funds can be used for whatever physical improvement projects they feel they need: walkways, drains, water supply, toilets, community centers, canal cleaning, etc.

- ***But each city needs the forum to agree on this!*** Because the funds are small, and they are not enough for everyone. So there has to be a serious discussion between all the key local communities and support actors about what is most important.
- ***This is a way for the communities to make decisions and set priorities together, with a small amount of money.***
- **Kirtee :** This can also be a kind of leveraging budget, which communities can use to negotiate further funds from local sources, local government etc.

**AGREEMENT 4 :** To allow flexibility in how the budget for each city's BIG project is used :

- **Big project funds** could be used for house construction, infrastructure or buying land. The big project funds could also go into the city fund and be used as seed capital to leverage funds from other sources.
- **More than 50 Big Projects?** Although the ACCA program budget has funds for only 50 big projects in 3 years, it is possible that we implement 5 - 7 big projects in each country, we believe if it works well more budget should come to support along this direction, hopefully we can increase the number and we will have to find more money later! For the time being, we can make 5 Big projects as a ceiling per country, and later we can assess this decision again.

**AGREEMENT 5 :** To set a ceiling for the national process at \$10,000 per country, per year.

That includes ALL the country groups participating in the ACCA Program, this is not a budget per group!